

## **LACDMH HOSTS EIGHTH ANNUAL HOUSING INSTITUTE**

**By Karen Zarsadias-Ige, LACDMH Public Information Officer**



For two days, the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) and CSH jointly presented the eighth annual Housing Institute, *Making a Difference...Celebrating Our Work & Vision*.

Held on Wednesday, June 24<sup>th</sup> and Thursday, June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015, the conference took place at the California Endowment Center in downtown Los Angeles. It welcomed more than 400 mental health providers, housing developers, supportive services providers, and property and asset management staff.



On the first day, LACDMH Director Marvin J. Southard, DSW, addressed the audience during opening remarks. He spoke about the importance of housing for homeless mental health consumers. "Nobody is going to have recovery even with the best treatment, if they're living under a freeway bridge," he explained. "Our vision... Housing with permanent support, so we can build community."



This year's keynote speaker was Darrell Steinberg, founder and board chair of the Steinberg Institute for Advancing Mental Health Policy. He is best known as the former legislator who co-authored Proposition 63, also known as the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA). Steinberg also echoed the same sentiment about the need to have both housing and treatment in order to be on the road to wellness. "This (Housing Institute) agenda is recognition of how hard this is – and complicated it is. And, how important it is," Steinberg said. "It's about hope, belief, faith and never giving up on the human being.... How can people get better if they don't have clean, safe places to live?"

Besides speakers, there were several workshops throughout the day on finance, housing development, property & asset management, integrated treatment teams, health & wellness, and more.



During the lunch break, attendees were able to watch the film *Lost Angels – Skid Row Is My Home*. After the screening, a panel discussion took place with one of the featured individuals in the documentary.

This year's Housing Institute was sponsored and supported by LACDMH, CSH, Meta Housing Corporation, Nu-Way Mattresses Corp., Wells Fargo, Shelter Partnership, Inc., A Community of Friends, Enterprise, Jovenes, Inc., Skid Row Housing Trust, HCHC, Century Housing, National Equity Fund, SRO Housing Corporation, Inc., and Path Ventures.